

A FISHERMAN'S SPIDER.

By C. W. De VIS, M.A.

A ZEALOUS correspondent, Mr. E. J. Banfield, of Dunk Island, has lately published in a local journal an interesting account of the art of fishing as practised by the natives in his vicinity. Among the many items of information recorded by Mr Banfield there is one which might be regarded as supplying evidence of aforetime intercourse between the natives of our North-east coast and those of New Guinea. That the fishermen of Papua use the web of a spider as a bait and tangle, by means of a kite, in their capture of fish, has already been made known to us,* and we are now informed that aborigines on the fringe of our mainland employ for a like purpose the same substance, though not in the same manner. One's interest in this occurrence of an unusual custom prompted a request that the observer would help to make known also the spinner of the web to which he referred. To this request he kindly responded by sending an example of the spider for inspection. As was expected it proved to be a *Nephila*. It is, moreover, one that may at least take rank as an additional subspecies of *N. maculata*.

NEPHILA MACULATA PISCATORUM nov. subsp.

The lineation of the sides of the abdomen, recorded by Mr. E. Simon in his description of the subspecies *N. maculata jalorensis*,† is here brought into great prominence by incrassation, which renders the sides obliquely corrugated and raises their margins above and below, considerably above the level of the adjacent surfaces; these consequently appearing to be depressed within; the corrugation extending fore and aft on the upper surface completely encloses it, on the lower it surrounds the sides and posterior end only.

* Annals Queensland Museum No. 5, p. 4, 1900.

† Proc. Zool. Soc., 1901, p. 58.

Colouration.—Abdomen above and beneath velvety dark green, on the posterior half of its upper surface four darker but faint lines converging towards the tip, immediately in front of which are two transverse yellow bands; on the lower surface a yellow transverse band interrupted in the middle, in front of the epigyne, and a large yellow spot behind it, sides of abdomen olive green relieved by yellow lines on several of the corrugations. Legs black, a bright yellow spot on each coxa and one beneath the distal end of each femur and tibia.

Female.—Ceph., 12 mm. long, 10 mm. broad.

Abd., 23.5 „ „ 12 „ „

Str. 6 „ „ 5 „ „

Che., 6 „ „ 4 „ „

	Coxa.		Tr. & Fem.		Pat. & Tib.		Met. & Tars.	
Legs—1—	4 mm.	—	26 mm.	—	24 mm.	—	27 mm.	= 91 mm.
2—	3.2 „	—	21 „	—	19.7 „	—	30 „	= 74.2 „
3 —	3 „	—	14.5 „	—	11 „	—	17 „	= 45.5 „
4—	4 „	—	25.2 „	—	19 „	—	30.5 „	= 78.8 „

Type in Queensland Museum.

Loc.: Dunk Island.